

PRESS RELEASE

Autoritratti. Iscrizioni del femminile nell'arte italiana contemporanea
Curatorial coordination by Uliana Zanetti

MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna
Exhibition: 12th May – 1st September 2013. Opening: 11th May 2013
Meetings and conferences: May 2013

Autoritratti. Iscrizioni del femminile nell'arte italiana contemporanea a broad-ranging, comprehensive collective show dedicated to the **relationship between women and art in Italy in recent decades** will be inaugurated at the MAMbo on **11th May**.

In comparison with other contexts (and with the United States and Britain in particular), Italy presents an anomaly: between the end of the 1960s and the 1970s, there was no development of an art explicitly connoted as feminist, and nor of a critical debate confronting art and feminism. Despite this, it is possible to find numerous traces of a widespread move to **give significance to gender difference** in Italy too, and this is documented in the exhibition through a wide range of **positions and practices**.

The theme, proposed by **Uliana Zanetti** and developed by a section of the MAMbo's female staff, some of whom adopting a new role for the occasion, has stimulated the interest of established women artists, critics, scholars and directors of Italian museums who have taken part in the initiative. Their collaboration has taken various forms of research and divulgation – exhibitions, seminars, video interviews, publications – developed in a process of continuous comparison between the participants.

The exhibition will present the works of established artists, for the most part produced for the occasion and referring to the different **thematic areas** developed by **Emanuela De Cecco**, **Laura Iamurri**, **Arabella Natalini**, **Francesca Pasini**, **Maria Antonietta Trasforini** and by the **museum's work group**. These will be joined by the sentimental contribution dedicated to Maria Lai by **Cristiana Collu** (director of the MART di Rovereto), and by the curatorial contribution of **Letizia Ragaglia** (director of the Museion of Bolzano). The **a.titolo** collective, comprising Giorgina Bertolino, Francesca Comisso, Lisa Parola and Luisa Perlo, will be taking care of the production of a work by Anna Scalfi Eghenter commissioned especially by the MAMbo as part of the **New commissions** project. The overall development of the project has also profited from the contributions as to theory of **Federica Timeto**.

The artists who have confirmed their participation so far are: Alessandra Andrini, Paola Anziché, Marion Baruch, Valentina Berardinone, Enrica Borghi, Anna Valeria Borsari, Chiara Camoni, Annalisa Cattani, Alice Cattaneo, Daniela Comani, Daniela De Lorenzo, Marta Dell'Angelo, Elisabetta Di Maggio, Silvia Giambrone, Goldiechiari, Alice Guareschi, Maria Lai (passed away on 16th April 2013), Christiane Löhr, Claudia Losi, Anna Maria Maiolino, Eva Marisaldi, Sabrina Mezzaqui, Marzia Migliora, Ottonella Mocellin e Nicola Pellegrini, Maria Morganti, Margherita Morgantini, Liliana Moro, Chiara Pergola, Letizia Renzini, Moira Ricci, Mili Romano, Anna Rossi, Anna Scalfi Eghenter, Elisa Sighicelli, Alessandra Spranzi, Grazia Toderi, Sabrina Torelli, Traslochi Emotivi, Tatiana Trouvé, Marcella Vanzo and Grazia Varisco.

While delineating the main markers in what is a vast and important panorama, the event does not aim to offer an exhaustive survey of Italian woman artists, who fortunately are numerous and often of the highest quality, but simply to present significant examples of the operative, methodological and discursive innovations introduced, developed and distributed thanks in part to some of them. Far from aiming to celebrate a genre, the intent of *Autoritratti* is to identify new tools of analysis and narration to give a more comprehensive picture of the richness of the contributions and stances that nourish the vitality of today's art, aware that the connotations of gender are a considerable element in the formation of social and symbolic dynamics characterising its presence on the public scene.

The constant reference to the **culture of difference** has marked out the working group's **methodology**. From feminism, the group drew a willingness to undertake a continuous self-reflexive interrogation, assigning importance to a reciprocal recognition between women, to a collective elaboration fed from taking oneself as a starting point, to the choosing of notions of desire and care as horizons governed by political activity. In this sense, the aesthetic dimension becomes a connective element between theory and practice, culture and politics, and the museum takes on a role as motor of relations. During the development of the project, which remained without title for a while, a considerable number of methodological analogies with the reflections of a leading figure in militant Italian feminism progressively emerged: namely, with **Carla Lonzi** (who was also an art critic, albeit with a deliberate sense of remove from the subject). Her *Autoritratto*, published in 1969, led to choosing the first part of the exhibition's title. This has been flanked by another quotation, in tribute to **Griselda Pollock** and her *Differencing the Canon. Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (1999).

Autoritratti forms part of a **far vaster investigation**, arising from a context of reflection which, taking the MAMbo's collections as its starting point, seeks to highlight the interconnections between art, identity and politics in the contemporary Italian context through a series of approaches, each marked by specific objectives. The first event, realised as part of the ART CITY Bologna 2013 programme, was the collective *Autoritratti 1. Nuove gen(d)erazioni* exhibition, curated by Donatella Lombardo and Giorgia Benedetta Soncin and held at the Accademia delle Belle Arti di Bologna (17th January - 2nd February). This was dedicated to the young artists who have received a training at the Accademia. The exhibition provided an initial opportunity to test the interest the theme stimulates among the new generations and trial the potential for a genuine work group based on reciprocal studies. This first initiative will be followed in May by a **series of meetings** with all the participants and with some cultural operators, scholars and activists of international fame. Within this framework, **Elvira Vannini** will be organising a specific cycle of conferences on the theme of *The cooperative space of women artists as a setting for social change*. Further study days and conversations are being planned, to which numerous Italian figures will be invited. Some **video interviews** with women of culture who have played a significant role in forming taste in Bologna will be screened during the period of opening of the exhibition at the MAMbo. They are **Dede Auregli, Silvia Evangelisti, Vera Fortunati** and **Ginevra Grigolo**.

The MAMbo work group comprises: Elisa Maria Cerra, Liliana Fenu, Eva Fuchs, Elena Gerla, Carlotta Guerra, Monica Guidi, Donatella Lombardo, Alessia Masi, Angela Pelliccioni, Giulia Pezzoli, Francesca Rebecchi, Anna Rossi, Sabrina Samorì, Elisa Schiavina, Barbara Secci, Giorgia Benedetta Soncin, Nicoletta Tomba, Giusi Vecchi and Uliana Zanetti.

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